

The IDVA Update



Mitch Daniels - Governor
Tom Applegate - Director

October 2006

The Indiana Department of Veterans Affairs Newsletter

Fall Edition

National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day

Proclamation from the One Hundred Third Congress of the United States of America at the second session. Begun and held at the City of Washington on Tuesday the twenty-fifth day of January, one thousand nine hundred and ninety four.

Joint Resolution designating December 7, of each year as National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day.

Whereas, on December 7, 1941, the Imperial Japanese Navy and Air Force attacked units of the armed forces of the United States stationed at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii;

Whereas, more than 2,000 citizens of the United States were killed and more than 1,000 citizens of the United States were wounded in the attack on Pearl Harbor;

Whereas, the attack on Pearl Harbor marked the entry of the United States into World War II;

Whereas, the veterans of World War II and all other people of the United States commemorate December 7 in remembrance of the attack on Pearl Harbor; and

Whereas, commemoration of the attack on Pearl Harbor will instill in all people of the United States a greater understanding and appreciation of the selfless sacrifice of the individuals who served in the armed forces of the United States during World War II: Now, therefore, be It

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress

assembled, That December 7 of each year is designated as National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day and the President is authorized and requested -

(1) to issue annually a proclamation calling on the people of the United States to observe the day with appropriate ceremonies and activities; and

(2) to urge all Federal agencies, and interested organizations, groups, and individuals, to fly the flag of the United States at half staff each December 7 in honor of the individuals who died as a result of their service at Pearl Harbor.

John Shafer Inducted Into the Kentland Hall of Fame



The Kentland Chamber of Commerce and the Newton County Enterprise hosted their annual dinner on August 17th to honor the recipients of the Citizen of the Year and the latest inductee into the Kentland Hall of Fame.

Randy Pruden, a reporter for the Newton County Enterprise, introduced the Hall of Fame honoree, Col. John Shafer, U.S. Army, retired. John is the Newton County Veterans' Service Officer.

Pruden talked of the 27 years Shafer served in the Army. During his service, he was stationed in Korea, Vietnam and Turkey.

Pruden stated, "One third of the homeless are veterans. Many come home from war with disabilities and can't get work. In this county, there is one person they can turn to. That is our honoree, John Shafer."

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(John Shafer - continued)

After Shafer's acceptance speech, members of the audience were invited to come forward and speak about Shafer.

Ed Wilson of the Kentland American Legion was the first to step to the podium. Wilson stated that Shafer always had stacks of forms to fill out for people who didn't know how to, or were unable to do it themselves. He acknowledged how much Shafer has done for the community, saying, "That's why we're here tonight, to thank John."

Rich Miller thanked Shafer for his work for the entire community.

Paul Anderson, Lake Village American Legion Post Service Officer, spoke of the first time he ever met Shafer. They met at a Veteran's Day observance in Enos. Shafer had gotten all five of the Newton County posts to participate in the event. Since then, Anderson said, "We have a very good ceremony every year."

When Anderson found out that Shafer was the Veterans' Service Officer, he said he had a question or two or three for him. Shafer answered all his questions and solved all his problems. Anderson stated that Shafer had helped him to get his disability rating from the VA. "I know he has helped many other veterans besides me," Anderson concluded. "Congratulations, John."

Shafer introduced his family who were there to see him receive his award. Along with his wife, Beth, were his son, John Jr., daughter-in-law, Sheila and granddaughters, Chelsea and Paige.

New State Approving Agency Director Chosen



IDVA welcomes back Tim Maley in his new position as the Director of the State Approving Agency. He was most recently employed by the VA Regional Office, but was a member of IDVA back in the 1990's as one of the State Service Officers. Welcome home,

Tim.

New Administrative Assistant Hired



Cheryl Phillips has been selected for the position of Administrative Assistant to the Director of IDVA to replace retiree Judy Holgate. Cheryl has been with the State of Indiana since 1972. Cheryl comes to us from the Department of Health where she has been since 1980. Warm welcome to Cheryl.

New VA Trauma Clinic to Serve Soldiers From Three States



Susan Bowers (center), Director of the Roudebush VA Medical Center, officially cuts the ribbon to open the Poly trauma II Facility.

The Associated Press

August 19, 2006 4:22 PM

A new Veterans Affairs trauma unit in Indianapolis will treat some of the most seriously wounded soldiers from three states closer to their homes.

The Poly trauma II & Rehab Intensive Therapy Service opened Friday at the Roudebush Veterans Affairs Medical Center. It joins 21 others nationwide treating the most seriously wounded soldiers coming home from Iraq. The Indianapolis clinic will serve soldiers from Indiana, Illinois and Michigan.

The 11-bed unit, staffed by as many as 50 specialists, provides a wide range of medical services that until now were available only in separate

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(Poly Trauma - continued)

facilities. It's also designed to ease soldiers' return from war.

Among the injured veterans on hand for Friday's grand opening was Army Spc. Greg Brooks, 37, of Greenwood. He was treated in Tennessee after suffering a traumatic brain injury and losing half of the hearing in his right ear when his vehicle struck a land mine near Talafar, Iraq, in June 2005.

"My heart is for these guys who are coming off active duty and don't have a clue what's available to them. There are a lot who don't have any physical scars, but they've got emotional scars. That is the bigger part of why this unit is so important," said Brooks, who has been coming to the VA center in downtown Indianapolis for therapy.

The center's new clinic has five rooms that can house two soldiers each and a single room for the most severely wounded soldiers. It will offer speech, physical, occupational, mental health and sports therapy, use electronic and board games for rehabilitation and offer state-of-the-art prosthetic limbs.

Marine Sgt. Nick Bennett, 36, of New Whiteland lost a major portion of his right thigh, had his shoulder split to the bone and took shrapnel to his lower back and left bicep when an Iraqi insurgents rocket struck 15 feet from his position in September 2004.

Like Brooks, Bennett has been treated as an outpatient at Roudebush for more than a year after spending two months being treated at National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, MD. When he arrived at Roudebush, his idea of a Veterans Affairs hospital wasn't a positive one.

"Knowing what I know now, I'd come here in a heartbeat," Bennett said. "I wouldn't be sitting here as well as I am today if it were not for the people here on the rehab floor."

(Footnote: A young woman became the first official veteran admitted to the Poly Trauma clinic on Weds. Sept 6, 2006)

Patriot Guard Riders Escort a Piece of Limestone Taken From The Pentagon after 9/11 Attacks



Thursday August 24th. the sounds of motorcycles could be heard at the state house as the Patriot Guard rode into town escorting a piece of limestone that came from the Pentagon after the 9/11 terrorist attacks. A solemn silence soon followed as this piece of history was slowly put on display.

This year marks the fifth anniversary of the terror attacks that gripped our nation that ultimately led us into the war on terror.

Standing watch over the piece of limestone which incidentally came from a quarry here in Indiana, were members of the Indiana Army National Guard based at Tyndall Armory on Pennsylvania Street. The two guards stood on either side of the relic at parade rest as several spectators came to pay their respects to this piece of history. Adorned on either side of the wooden box that contained the piece, were two memorials, one dedicated to the police and fire department officers and the other to the soldiers and sailors who lost their lives on that tragic day, a day that will live on forever in our memories and our hearts.

The stone is headed to be a part of a 9/11 memorial garden in Dodge City, Kansas. Members of the guard from Illinois, Indiana, Missouri and Kansas are each taking turns escorting it to its final destination.

Retired WWII Army Air Corps Veteran Donates to the War Memorial



Retired WWII Master Sergeant William Grider made a donation of personal memorabilia from his days as an Army-Air Corps Radio Operator on B-24 Liberators. Director of IDVA, Tom Applegate, visited with Mr. Grider in his room at St. Vincent's Hospice where Mr. Grider regaled everyone present with

stories about when he was, as he puts it, a cocky young flyer. Mr. Grider produced a box containing a treasure trove of memories, including pictures of B-24's making bombing runs on D-Day. Mr. Grider talked about the 36 flights that he and his crew took. He said that the most dangerous missions were the six times that they had to transport fuel for General Patton.

Freedom Walk Commemorated the 5th Anniversary of 9/11 Held Nationwide

On the fifth anniversary of 9/11, the Blue Star Hoosier Mothers, Indiana Chapter 3, of the Blue Star Mothers of America paid tribute to those who lost their lives and those who gave so much of themselves on September 11, 2001. The Crawfordsville community event was designed to raise awareness about the various patriotic or military support groups available. This year, the Freedom Walk was held on Monday, the actual 9/11 anniversary date, but it may be moved to a weekend date in the future. The coordinating committee plans to open the event to more organizations or groups. Interested parties may contact the Blue Star Hoosier Mothers at:

bluestarhoosiermom@hotmail.com

150th Annual Indiana State Fair



The 150th annual Indiana State Fair ran August 9th - 20th. Once again IDVA had a table in the exhibition hall. Thank you to everyone who volunteered their time to work the table to answer questions and to hand out the famous yard sticks. Despite record attendance at this year's fair, IDVA still had a box of the yard sticks left over.

The culmination of the fair was Veterans Day, held on the last day. Featured performer at the veterans service was Travis Conway, an Iraq veteran. The key note speaker for this year's veterans day at the fair was Lt. Governor Becky Skillman and General Moorhead, Commander 38th Infantry Division (M)

A crowd of 77,307 people turned out for the fair's final day on Sunday, swelling the 12-day event's total attendance to 870,052, which makes it the third-highest attended Indiana State Fair in recorded history.



Travis Conway performing his song Sweet Dreams, written in honor of those serving overseas.



General Moorhead greets Spc. Mitchell of the Indiana National Guard.

Gulf War Syndrome

Brown County Veterans' Service Officer John Piper submitted the following information, and it contains items CVSOs should be prepared to discuss with veterans from their county. Thank you, John, for the information.

The Persian Gulf War, which saw the fewest deaths than any previous conflict, produced a malady termed the Gulf War Syndrome, but pinpointing the source has been so far impossible.

Despite low mortality and morbidity during the war, many soldiers returned home with an array of symptoms:

- ♦ Fatigue
- ♦ Muscle and joint pain
- ♦ Memory loss
- ♦ Headaches

More recently, a similar condition has been defined as Chronic Multi-symptom Illness (CMI). Veterans who served in the Gulf War are nearly twice as likely as non-deployed veterans in the same era to suffer from CMI, according to a recent study by researchers at the St. Louis VAMC. Veterans with CMI have been diagnosed as having at least two out of three broad groups of symptoms, including fatigue, mood or cognitive disorders, and muscle or joint pain, for at least six months. Researchers have found that veterans with CMI also have a higher incidence of metabolic syndrome, which increases the risk of coronary heart disease, diabetes, and cirrhosis of the liver. According to lead researcher Dr. Melvin Blanchard, associate chief of medicine at the St. Louis VAMC, "Physicians need to be aware of the possible manifestations of CMI and the need to treat them, and metabolic syndrome is a key example."

Other hazards possibly encountered by Gulf War veterans:

- ♦ Iraq had biological warfare capability and had used chemical weapons against Iran. The threat of chemical warfare was very real.

- ♦ PB (Pyridostigmine bromide) was experimental but used as an anti-nerve agent by military members.

- ♦ Soman, a nerve agent, is known to be in Iraq's weapon arsenals.

- ♦ Some troops may have been inadvertently exposed to Sarin and Cyclosarin when destroying an Iraqi munitions facility.

Depleted Uranium (DU) was used by the United States and British military in projectiles and armor for tanks. Service personnel may have been exposed from "friendly fire" and from close proximity to burning vehicles. Potential hazards related to DU include radiation and chemical toxicity (similar to lead)

A preliminary study published in 2001 found ALS, or Lou Gehrig's disease, occurred in Gulf War veterans in high numbers at young ages, acknowledged by the U.S. government. This suggests a link between service in the Gulf War and the risk of developing a specific illness.

Study Claims That Gulf War Syndrome Does Not Exist

Associated Press, September 12, 2006

WASHINGTON - A federally funded study concludes there is no such thing as Gulf War syndrome, even though U. S. and foreign veterans of the war report more symptoms of illness than do soldiers who didn't serve there.

U. S. and foreign veterans of the Gulf War do suffer from an array of very real problems, according to the Veterans Administration-sponsored report released Tuesday. Yet there is no one complex of symptoms to suggest those veterans - nearly 30 percent of all those who served - suffered or still suffer from a single identifiable syndrome.

"There's no unique pattern of symptoms. Every pattern identified in Gulf War veterans also seems to exist in other veterans, though it is important to note the symptom rate is higher, and it is a serious issue," said Dr. Lynn Goldman, of Johns Hopkins University, who headed the Institute of Medicine committee that prepared the report.

The VA contracted with the institute, part of the National Academy of Sciences, to review scientific studies and probe the issue at the direction of Con-

(Gulf War - continued)

gress. Tuesday's report is the latest in the important series, which the VA will rely on to determine whether Gulf War veterans are eligible for special disability benefits if they are found to suffer from illnesses that can be linked to their service. Veterans can now claim those benefits only by making an undiagnosed illness claim.

A member of the Research Advisory Committee on Gulf War Veterans' Illnesses, also chartered by Congress, called the report the "first step" in cataloging the studies done on veterans of the conflict.

"But the most prevalent problems in Gulf War veterans are the multi-symptom illness/Gulf War syndrome-type problems that still affect a sizable proportion of those who served in the war. I am disappointed that the IOM report does little to analyze what these studies collectively tell us about the nature and causes of these conditions," said Lea Steele, a Kansas State University epidemiologist who is the committee's scientific director.

Soldiers who served in the Persian Gulf following the Iraqi invasion of neighboring Kuwait in August 1990 have reported symptoms that include fatigue, memory loss, muscle and joint pain, rashes and difficulty sleeping. But not all suffer from the same array of symptoms, which has complicated efforts to pinpoint their cause, according to the report.

Nearly 700,000 U. S. soldiers, along with troops from 34 other countries, took part in the Gulf War. Once in the region, those soldiers were exposed to a wide array of toxins and other potential health hazards, including smoke from hundreds of oil well fires, pesticides, depleted uranium ammunition and possibly the nerve agent sarin, released during the demolition of a munitions dump.

Inadequate screening of soldiers before deployment in the Gulf War, coupled with a lack of environmental monitoring during the conflict, have hindered efforts to determine whether exposure to those contaminants is linked to any illness, the report also notes.

For years, the government denied the mysterious illnesses were linked to the war. It now acknowledges that at least some were due to wartime service. The government is no longer pointing to stress as the likely reason, as some federally funded studies had suggested.

The new report did find evidence of an elevated risk of the rare nerve disease amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, also called Lou Gehrig's disease, among Gulf War veterans. They also face an increased risk of anxiety disorders, depression and substance abuse, it said.

BIRTH DEFECTS IN CHILDREN OF FEMALE VIETNAM VETERANS

County Veterans' Service Officers should review their files of Hoosier women veterans of the war in Vietnam, looking specifically at filing claims for birth defects in their children.

Birth defects in the children of *male* veterans of the Vietnam War are limited to spina bifida, but women veterans of the war in Vietnam should be aware that there are many more covered birth defects which could result from their exposure to Agent Orange.

Other (than spinal bifida) disabilities in the children of women Vietnam veterans, "covered birth defects" means any birth defect identified by VA as a birth defect associated with the service of women Vietnam veterans in Vietnam from 28 Feb 61 to 7 May 75, and that has resulted, or may result, in permanent physical or mental disability. However, the term does not include a condition due to a familial (this is, inherited) disorder; birth-related injury; or fetal or neonatal infirmity with other well-established causes.

Covered birth defects include, but are not limited to, the following conditions:

1. Achondroplasia,
2. Cleft lip and cleft palate,

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3. Congenital heart disease,
4. Congenital talipes equinovarus (clubfoot),
5. Esophageal and intestinal atresia,
6. Hallerman-Streiff syndrome,
7. Hip dysplasia,
8. Hirschprung's disease (congenital megacolon),
9. Hydrocephalus due to aqueductal stenosis,
10. Hypospadias,
11. Imperforate anus,
12. Neural tube defects,
13. Poland syndrome,
14. Pyloric stenosis,
15. Syndactyly (fused digits),
16. Tracheoesophageal fistula,
17. Undescended testicle, and
18. Williams syndrome.

**** Not covered are conditions that are congenital malignant neoplasm's, chromosomal disorders, or developmental disorders. In addition, conditions that do not result in permanent physical or mental disability are not covered birth defects. All birth defects that are not excluded under the language above are covered birth defects. (Source: Extracted from Agent Orange Review, Vol. 19, No 2, Dated July 2003)**

VA Issues New Veteran Identification Cards (VIC)



All Old Veteran Identification Cards and Patient Identification Cards To Be Replaced.

Hoosier veterans should be aware of the VA Medical Centers' efforts to reissue Veterans Identification Cards.

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has announced that VA health care facilities are beginning an aggressive campaign to assure that enrolled veterans with old versions of its ID cards are issued the new Veterans Identification Card (VIC). VA decided to initiate the mass replacement to reduce veteran vulnerability to identity theft and to demonstrate VA's commitment to securing the confidential personal information of all enrolled veterans.

VA indicates that prior versions of its identification cards display sensitive information such as social security number and date of birth on the front of the card. The new VIC, which was introduced in 2004, removed the sensitive information from the face of the card.

Since the new VIC was introduced in March 2004, approximately 2.4 million enrolled veterans have been issued the new VIC. VHA estimates that between 3 and 4 million enrolled veterans have not yet been issued a new VIC. VA hopes to complete the massive replacement program within the next 12 months.

For more information about the new VIC card, contact your Medical Center's Eligibility & Enrollment Office or visit the VA's Eligibility Web site at

French *Legion of Honor* to be Awarded to Four Hoosier WWII Veterans

The French Legion of Honor dates back to the days of Napoleon. First awarded in its present form in 1804 by the emperor himself, the most well known recipient was author Victor Hugo. The scarlet ribbon from which the cross with its motto "Honneur et Patrie" is suspended is coveted to this day by the most illustrious men and women of France and much esteemed abroad.

On Veteran's Day, November 11, 2006, as part of the annual program, four Hoosiers, all World War II veterans, will be presented with this medal by the French Consul from Chicago. Those men are Frank A Chambers Jr., Muncie, Indiana; Earl Kreinhop, Batesville; Winfred Pulsifer, Indianapolis, Indiana, and Harry Porter from southern Indiana.

The program, held at the traditional hour of 11:00 a.m., the time the armistice was signed ending World War I, will be held at the Indiana War Memorial. Governor Daniels will be in attendance to help honor the men and women of the armed forces who have given so much in the defense of our country and for the freedom of those who live abroad, and these four distinguished Hoosiers. The public is invited.

Secretary of State Reminds Veterans to Bring IDs and Cast Their Ballots



Voters in this year's General Election may notice something different at Indiana polls – poll workers statewide will request photo ID. Though many Hoosiers have instinctively reached for their IDs for years, state law now requires it. Specifically, it requires a government-issued photo ID containing the voter's name and an expiration date.

It is significant to note that nearly every Military ID meets these standards. Many retired veterans hold military photo ID cards stating "INDEF," indicating an indefinite expiration date. To answer questions regarding the use of these cards for voting, the bipartisan Indiana Election Division of the office of Indiana Secretary of State Todd Rokita issued an opinion concluding these cards should indeed suffice.

"It is important to me personally to preserve the integrity of the election process that so many of our good men and women have died to protect," said Rokita. "Photo ID is a no-cost, common-sense way to achieve this by fighting fraud at the polls. Veterans who have dedicated their lives to protecting our democracy should be able to proudly present their military photo ID cards when they exercise their right to vote, and the Election Division's opinion on retired military IDs reinforces that."

Photo ID is a state-level reform implemented along side a number of federal reforms mandated by the Help America Vote Act of 2002 (HAVA). Under HAVA, Indiana polling places and voting systems are now fully accessible to Hoosiers with disabilities. Also under HAVA, Indiana recently launched the first-ever statewide voter file to connect all 92 counties' voter registration records with appropriate state agencies. This system allows the state to maintain an accurate voter list by identifying duplicate records and deceased voters.

Rokita's office launched a \$2 million statewide initiative more than a year ago to educate voters about photo ID and HAVA reforms. The ongoing effort includes television and radio advertising, publishing educational materials, advertising in and on public transportation, and talking one-on-one with Hoosiers in their local communities. The initiative also incorporates Indiana's first statewide poll worker training curriculum aimed at helping election administrators understand new laws and run fair, efficient elections.

"On November 7, Hoosiers should go to the polls with confidence in our election process," said Rokita. "We are taking great strides to ensure every legally-cast vote counts and carries the same weight as every other legitimate vote. As the state's chief election officer and as a citizen, I am proud of our accomplishments."

Rokita encourages Hoosiers with election-related questions to call the Secretary of State's Voter Helpline at 1-866-IN-1-VOTE (1-866-461-8683), visit www.sos.IN.gov, or visit www.photoID.IN.gov. Veterans should be aware that V.A. Benefits Cards generally will not suffice for voting purposes. Those without photo ID meeting the necessary requirements may obtain an Indiana photo ID card free of charge from any BMV license branch. There are specific exemptions from the photo ID requirement for the indigent, those with a religious objection to being photographed, and homebound individuals who qualify to vote via traveling election board.

Resources:

The full text of the Indiana Election Division's photo ID frequently asked questions document is located on the Secretary of State's official website at www.sos.IN.gov/elections.

To learn more about Indiana's photo ID law, visit www.photoID.in.gov.

For questions about photo ID or elections in general, Hoosiers may always call the Secretary of State's Voter Helpline at 1-866-IN-1-VOTE (1-866-461-8683).

State Approving Agency Corner

In our last update, we elaborated on Veterans learning more about the Montgomery GI Bill and our agency's role in the process. During this session, we will take the opportunity to highlight a few benefits of the Montgomery GI Bill to include VA reimbursement to qualified individuals desiring to take National Tests. Tests covered under this provision have been determined to be national in scope and generally required for admission to an institution of higher learning or graduate school. Examples of such tests include Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT), Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT), College-Level Examination Program (CLEP) and Law School Admission Test (LSAT). A complete list of approved tests and general rules for application can be found at www.gibill.va.gov.

Other applications of the GI Bill include eligible veteran's ability to receive benefit awards for reimbursement of costs for testing to obtain licenses and certifications.

- These tests are offered by state, local or federal agencies that are required by law to practice an occupation. There is no limitation on the number of tests that may be taken except that an individual may not exceed his or her maximum entitlement.

- Additionally, entrepreneurship courses that enable or assist a person to start or enhance a small business may be eligible for reimbursement when training is offered by a qualified provider.

- Another potential use of your benefit can include on-the-job training (OJT) of less than six months for certain self-employment training programs. Provisions of the law require the training establishment provide full-time instruction that is necessary for obtaining licensure to engage in self-employment, or required for ownership and operation of a franchise

Benefits for entrepreneurship & OJT for self-employment are not available to the surviving spouse or dependent of a killed/missing in action or a 100% service connected disabled veteran with wartime service (Chapter 35). To learn more about approved

programs and applicable restrictions to those discussed in this article, you can utilize the search function and view more details at www.gpoaccess.gov, www.warms.vba.va.gov or www.law.cornell.edu. Those of you desiring a one stop shopping site with less legal terminology can also learn more details by visiting www.saavetrain.org/index.htm, this site is home to our National Association of State Approving Agencies.

Recent clarification (changing of the words) of the old requirement for a progressive wage increase for OJT programs within state and municipal occupations brings rejoice for many. This is a big step towards improving benefits, and one that will have us reaching out to employers that were previously ineligible for SAA approval. Our last update for this article will include a brief look at "Diploma Mills." The State of Indiana has been highly successful in restricting these institutions from operating within our borders, but this doesn't prevent their infiltration via the internet. The veteran/beneficiary should investigate an institution thoroughly if:

- the degree can be purchased,
- there is no evidence of accreditation or
- the accrediting agency appears questionable.

There are many other factors that should bring suspicion to such institutions; however, quality education requires effort and brings credibility.

Until the next time, please share in our warm welcome to the new Director of the State Approving Agency, Tim Maley. He joined our staff on August 14, 2006 and brings experience from days gone by. Tim can be reached at 317-232-3917. Representing the IDVA SAA Northern Region is myself, Ron Rousch at 317-232-3914 and for the Southern Region, please contact Mrs. Vicki Baker at 317-232-3916.

If you have questions concerning proprietary education (privately owned trade or vocational schools & institutions of higher learning) contact the Indiana Commission on Proprietary Education. Marsha Thornton at 317-232-1327 or Tara Adams

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at 317-234-3307, will assist you with these programs.

Thank you for your assistance and support of veterans' vocational and educational advancement.

Hoosier Veterans Assistance Foundation Hosts the Second Annual Event to Benefit Homeless Veterans

September 22, 2006 the Hoosier Veterans Assistance Foundation hosted the second annual Stand Down to benefit Hoosier homeless veterans. Food was generously provided by Malone's Catering. Members of the various service organizations were on hand to assist veterans file claims for service connection disability and/or pensions.

The following is information on the Stand Downs.

Stand Downs are one part of the Department of Veterans Affairs' efforts to provide services to homeless veterans. Stand Downs are typically one to three day events providing services to homeless veterans such as food, shelter, clothing, health screenings, VA and Social Security benefits counseling, and referrals to a variety of other necessary services, such as housing, employment and substance abuse treatment. Stand Downs are collaborative events, coordinated between local VAs, other government agencies, and community agencies who serve the homeless.

The first Stand Down was organized in 1988 by a group of Vietnam veterans in San Diego. Since then, Stand Downs have been used as an effective tool in reaching out to homeless veterans, reaching more than 200,000 veterans and their family members between 1994-2000. (www1.va.gov/homeless/)



House Republicans Pledge Support for Hoosier Veterans and Active Duty Troops

House Republican incumbent and challenger candidates made the sixth in a series of Pledges for Indiana's Progress throughout Indiana on Monday, September 25th, to honor and support Hoosier Veterans and active duty military.

The House Republican proposals support military members both past and present with initiatives originally proposed by the veterans' organizations and submitted to the Administration by the Indiana Department of Veterans' Affairs.

The original Veterans' Benefits Package, which County Veterans' Service Officers have seen, contained eleven items submitted by the veterans' organizations and five submitted by the Indiana National Guard Association.

The group pledged support by expanding the Military Family Relief Fund to include the families of Indiana's active duty service members, and to increase the opportunities for Hoosiers to contribute to the fund. It also further defined the covered grants to include money required for child care assistance.

The pledge of support includes supporting legislation which would exempt all military income of Indiana Reservists and Guard members who are actively deployed, and increase the amount all active duty military personnel are allowed to deduct from their state income taxes from \$2,000 to \$5,000 of their military pay.

Finally, the legislators pledged to support legislation which would extend the Delayed High School Diploma Program to include eligible veterans of the Korean War and the Vietnam War, and to support legislation which would further protect military discharge papers, such as the DD Form 214.

The Indiana Department of Veterans Affairs wants to thank all the legislators who have pledged support of these initiatives and encourage those who have not to do so. The Administration has shown overwhelming support for Hoosier veterans and expressed a continuing commitment to Indiana's veterans and their families.

Long Over-Due Medals Presented to World War II Veteran



September 8, 2006 was for Roberto Villegas (pronounced "VA Gus") a monumental day.

He celebrated his 80th birthday and received his long over-due medals from his service during World War II, all on the same day.

His family came from all over the United States to help him celebrate and to honor his accomplishments.

The 80-year-old veteran was very touched by the attention. "I saw a lot of stuff that I wouldn't want written about," he said. "We were supposed to forget about it."

But he never did.

After his discharge from the U. S. Army in 1946 (he was discharged as a corporal after serving with the 728th Amphibious Tank Battalion), Villegas returned to his native Texas to start a family with his wife, Dominga.

The couple moved to Nebraska, then relocated to the west side of Indianapolis where they resided for the next 50 years.

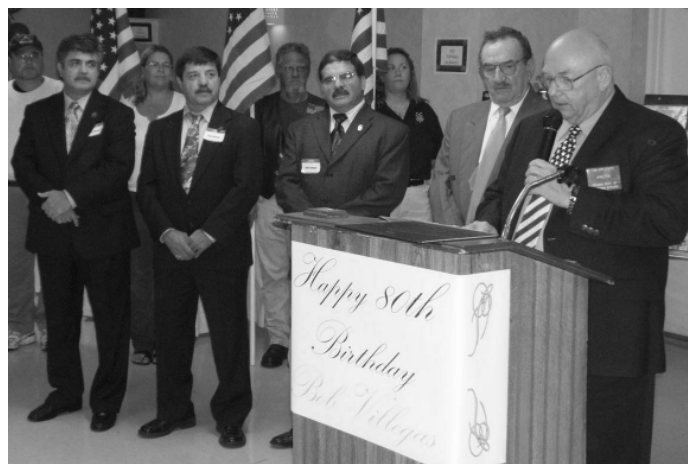
The couple had six children, three boys and three girls.

"We had no idea that our father was from the greatest generation," his son, Roberto Villegas Jr., said in a statement. "We just knew him as Dad, the coach who took the time to teach his sons and the neighborhood boys how to play baseball to keep us off the streets."

Villegas never thought about claiming the medals due to him until he returned to Texas after his retirement in 1990.

"There's a lot of us (Mexican-American veterans) in South Texas, California and Arizona," said Villegas, who spends winters in Texas. "I saw a lot of older men on Veteran's Day with their medals and wondered, 'What about mine?'"

Obtaining the medals took about 2 ½ years, a process that required him to submit proof of his ser-



From left, Roberto Villegas Jr., Rick Villegas, John Villegas, Robert Villegas Sr., and IDVA Director Tom Applegate who was the master of ceremonies.

vice and other documentation. He got help from a local VFW post in Indianapolis.

He considers himself lucky. While fighting in the Philippines and Okinawa, he had grenades thrown at him and was shot at by a sniper but was never wounded.

Villegas finds it ironic that his generation fought the war so that its children wouldn't have to fight in wars. His sons Robert Jr., 57; Rick, 56; and John, 55, all served in the military.

"We're still fighting," said Villegas. "Most of the World War II vets are gone. I'm just glad I could get my medals."

It's also a matter of Mexican-American pride.

"It proves to my nationality that we have done something to help the U. S. do their part to bring freedom to us."

IDVA Director Tom Applegate presented Villegas with the Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal with two bronze battle stars, the Good Conduct Medal, the Philippine Liberation Medal, the Honorable Service Lapel Pin and a Sharpshooter Badge with a rifle bar.



IDVA Director Tom Applegate, left, and World War II veteran Robert Villegas.

The American Service Member

Author Unknown



Your alarm goes off, you hit the snooze and sleep for another 10 minutes.

They stay up for days on end.

You take a warm shower to help you wake up.

They go days or weeks without running water.

You complain of a

"headache," and call in sick.

They get shot at as others are hit, and keep moving forward.

You put on your anti war/don't support the troops shirt, and go meet up with your friends.

They still fight for your right to wear that shirt.

You make sure your cell phone is in your pocket.

They clutch the cross hanging on the chain next to their dog tags.

You talk trash about your "buddies" who aren't with you.

They know they may not see some of their buddies again by day's end.

You walk down the street, staring at all the pretty girls.

They walk the streets, searching for insurgents and terrorists and people wanting to kill them.

You complain about how hot it is.

They wear the heavy gear, not daring to take off their helmet to wipe away the sweat.

You go out to lunch, and complain because the restaurant got your order wrong.

They don't have time to eat today.

You make your bed and wash your clothes.

They wear the same things for weeks, but need to make sure their weapons are clean.

You go to the mall and get your hair redone.

They don't have time to brush their teeth today.

You're angry because your shift ran 5 minutes over.

They're told they will be held over an extra 2 months.

You call your girlfriend or wife and set a date for tonight.

They wait for the mail to see if there is a letter from home.

You hug and kiss your spouse, like you do everyday. They hold close their letters from home and remember.

You roll your eyes as a baby cries.

They get a letter with pictures of their new child, and wonder if they'll ever meet.

You criticize your government, and say that war never solves anything.

They see the innocent tortured and killed by their own people and remember why they are fighting.

You hear the jokes about the war, and make fun of troops like them.

They hear the gunfire, bombs and screams of the wounded.

You see only what the media wants you to see.

They see the broken bodies lying around them.

You are asked to do something by your parents or guardian. You don't.

They do exactly what they are told.

You stay at home and watch TV.

They take whatever time they are given to call, write home, sleep, and eat.

You crawl into your soft bed, with down pillows, and get comfortable.

They crawl under a tank for shade and a 5 minute nap, only to be awakened by gunfire.

You sit there and judge them, saying the world is probably a worse place because of men and women like them.

If only there were more like them!

The Indiana Operation Enduring Freedom/ Operation Iraqi Freedom Memorial Wall

The following are casualties since the last Update.



Army Corporal Nathaniel S. Baughman, 23, Monticello, Indiana.

Assigned to 1st Battalion, 187th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division, Fort Campbell,

(continued on page 13)

Ky., he was killed July 17, 2006 while traveling with an Army convoy in Iraq. His mother, Jill Baughman, is the Logansport Red Cross executive director.

Nathaniel Baughman was a 2001 graduate of Twin Lakes High School in Monticello, and his family lives in nearby Idaville, about 30 miles north-east of Lafayette.



United States Army Private First Class Anthony P. Seig, 19, Sunman, Indiana.

Pfc. Anthony P. Seig died on Saturday, September 9, 2006 in Iraq when a rocket hit his barracks in Baghdad. Six other soldiers were injured in the attack. He was assigned to the 118th Military Police Company, 519th Military Police Battalion, 16th Military Police Brigade, based at Fort Bragg, NC. The military informed the family that Seig would posthumously receive the Bronze Star Medal and the Purple Heart. His decorations also include the National Defense Service Medal, the Iraqi Service Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, the Army Service Ribbon, the Army Overseas Service Medal and the Combat Action Badge.

The 2005 graduate of East Central High School in St. Leon, Indiana, Seig joined the Army shortly after graduation, and left for Iraq on June 24th, 2006.



United States Marine Corps Corporal Aaron Seal, 23, Elkhart, Indiana

Cpl. Aaron Seal, 23, of Elkhart, was killed Sunday while serving with a South Bend-based Marine Reserve engineering company in Baghdad.

The 2001 Elkhart Memorial High School graduate deployed for Iraq a month ago, said Maj. Celeste Ross, a spokeswoman for the U.S. Marine Reserves.

Mailing List for IDVA Update

Do you hate getting a lot of paper mail in your mailbox? Do you have an email account? If so, then here is a proposition for you. In an attempt to cut costs here at IDVA, it was suggested that a possible solution would be to send out the newsletter via email. I want your input, if you would prefer to receive your quarterly newsletter email instead of snail mail please call or email Kris Bertrand at IDVA. Her phone number is 317-232-3921, email kabertrand@dva.in.gov

IDVA Web Site Make Over

www.in.gov/veteran

Have you seen? The IDVA web site has undergone a complete makeover. The new web site made its debut on September 1st, 2006. The site is still a work in progress, we are continually making additions to the site. If you have not had a chance to visit the site, take a look and tell us what you think. Future plans for the site will also include the State Veterans Benefit Brochure that will be made available to everyone. Don't worry we will still be putting out the brochure in paper form too. We want the web site to be more user friendly by bringing many of the main categories to the home page. We have even included a picture and bio of the director.

Hoosier Women Veteran Program



According to the Department of Veterans Affairs, Indiana has 32,085 women veterans. However, only about one-third or so are using the benefits that they are entitled to. Hence the creation of

the Hoosier Women Veterans Program. One of the goals is to get the word out to as many women veterans in Indiana about the benefits that they may be entitled to. We have created our logo, having chosen Hoosier Women Veterans as the name. One reason Hoosier was chosen over Indiana is because the term Hoosier is very distinct to describe someone who is from or resides in Indiana. We have had pins and static decals printed that say 'Hoosier Woman Veteran'. Please contact Kris Bertrand at 317-232-3921 for more information.

Purple Heart Foundation Offers Local In-Home Training Program for Disabled Veterans



A new in-home training program for unemployed veterans is being offered by the Purple Heart Foundation.

Called the "Business Training Center" to provide remote and virtual in-home national training, the 15-week program provides 600 hours of training for positions in the information industry.

In phase one, the Foundation is offering free training at their headquarters in Annandale, Virginia, for positions in the "Business Training Center." Participants will be paid a stipend (\$11.00 an hour) and job placement assistance when the candidates complete the program. The program's special emphasis is on unemployed, combat-wounded and disabled veterans.

The chairman of the U. S. Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs, Senator Larry Craig (R-Idaho), expressed strong support recently for this new program that is providing paid training and, so far, 100 percent job placement for combat wounded and disabled veterans. Since its training program began last year, the Purple Heart Service Foundation has trained nearly 100 disabled and combat wounded veterans over the Internet for jobs in the information industry.

To qualify, a veteran must have a VA assigned disability rating, and a copy of his or her DD-214. A Purple Heart award is not required. For additional information, contact Ken Smith at the Military Order of the Purple Heart Service Foundation at (703) 340-8763 or online at:

<http://www.purpleheartfoundation.org>

GOVERNOR DANIELS' JOB FAIR SERIES

Governor Daniels' office in coordination with the Indiana Department of Workforce Development (DWD) will host a series of job fairs over the next twelve months. The series will include a regional job fair in each of the eleven workforce development regions and will be capped off with a larger statewide job fair focused on Indiana's Hoosier Comeback initiative. The Governor Daniels Regional Job Fair

series will focus on the host region's Strategic Skills Initiative, IEDC announced job growth, and education providers in the region.

2006 – 07 REGIONAL SCHEDULE AND SELECTED SITES

DWD proposes that Governor Daniels hold four job fairs in 2006 and eight in 2007. Regions and locations are prioritized based on unemployment rates and recent economic developments.

In 2006, there will be one job fair in September, two job fairs in October, and one job fair in November in the following regions and cities:

REGION	CITIES
2	South Bend or Elkhart
6	Muncie or Richmond
7	Terre Haute
11	Evansville or Vincennes

In 2007, there will be two job fairs in February, one in March to coincide with the Women's Big 10 Basketball Championships, two in May to capitalize on graduations, one in June and two in July in the following regions and cities:

REGION	CITIES/COUNTIES
1	Lake County
3	Ft. Wayne
4	Lafayette or Kokomo
5	Indianapolis
8	Bloomington
9	Columbus
10	Jeffersonville

STRUCTURE AND FACILITATION

The Governor's Office and DWD will select dates and cities for Governor Daniels' Job Fair series. DWD will work with each Regional Workforce Board to market the event and coordinate employers and educators related to the Strategic Skills Initiative. The Regional Workforce Board will be responsible for renting a venue, assigning booth space, and securing participants.

HOOSIER COME BACK

The Governor will host the first annual "Hoosier Come Back" job fair in 2007 in Indianapolis. The job fair should focus on high-tech, 21st century careers, and entrepreneurs. The event should coincide with other major events happening in Indiana in order to increase out-of-state attendance. Targeted months include March, May, and June.

The Facts About Indiana's Disabled Veteran License Plates

A Reminder: in the State of Indiana, both DAV 1 and DAV 2 plates are considered handicapped plates. As such, this office must abide by handicapped plate guidelines when approving DAV plates.

The following are guidelines utilized by IDVA in determining eligibility for DAV license plates.

DAV 1: 100% - Lower Body Conditions (Leg, Thigh, Back) or other conditions that obviously impair the veteran's walking to the extent of needing handicapped plates will normally be approved automatically with no further documentation required. (100% PTSD, Neurosis, Psychosis or other mental conditions do not qualify for either DAV plate. In those cases where walking impairments make up less than 50% of the individual's 100% permanent and total service connected disability, a doctor's statement attesting to the individual's need for handicapped parking privileges will be required before we can issue a DAV 1 plate.

DAV 2: 40% to 90% - Lower Body Conditions (Leg, Thigh, Back) or other conditions which obviously impair the veteran's walking to the extent of needing handicapped plates will normally be approved automatically with no further documentation required.

DAV 2: Less than 40% - Lower Body Conditions where the need for handicapped plates is not obvious, a doctor's letter* attesting to the need for handicapped plates for the veteran's service-connected disability will be required for approval.

DAV 2: Ratings for vague disabilities not as obvious (Bone Condition, Condition of the Skeletal System, Muscle Injury, Back Condition, Traumatic Arthritis etc.) will almost always require a doctor's letter* attesting to the veteran's need for handicapped plates for approval.

DAV 2: Combined Disability Ratings - Various combinations of ratings (e.g. 10% Knee, 10% Back, 20% Lumbar Spine) will also require a doctor's letter* for approval.

Rule: When in doubt, a doctor's letter* shall be required.

* A typed or handwritten note from the veteran or the Service Officer does not qualify as a doctor's letter and is not sufficient documentation.

National Archives Announces Special Training to be Held in Chicago

The National Archives and Administration-Great Lakes Region will be hosting two events in Chicago during the month of November to assist veterans and to celebrate their accomplishments. Veterans, Veteran Service Officers, veterans' advocates, as well as the general public are encouraged to attend.

Saturday November 11, 9 a.m. To 4 p.m.

Hands-on instruction on how to access online military records as well as individual and organizational military records that the National Archives and Records Administration-Great Lakes Region houses. The day will also feature presentations by military historians, exhibits of historical records from the National Archives, and screening of historic military-themed films from the holdings of the National Archives. This event is geared towards veterans, their families, and anyone with an interest in military history.

Tuesday, November 14, 9 a.m. To 4 p.m.

National Archives and Records Administration staff from NPRC and from the Great Lakes Region will offer training to Veterans' Service Officers and other veteran advocates on how to assist veterans in accessing their military records. Interested state and regional Veterans Affairs Officers are encouraged to contact the National Archives Great Lakes Region to make presentations or to distribute material at this event. State Service Officer, Kris Bertrand will attend this presentation for IDVA.



The Director's Page

IDVA continues to forge ahead with many of the initiatives which brought me to Indianapolis last year. I still strongly believe in a strong CVSO force and I believe that more intensive and extensive training is the foundation for a stronger core.

The only resistance I've encountered with this focus on training is from those CVSOs who have no desire to become accredited. I want to reassure everyone: I never intended for every CVSO to be accredited. My intention is simply to train every CVSO to the level that they *could* be accredited if that option was made available.

Gary Whitehead (Elkhart County), Jerry Griffis (Delaware County), Bruce Stanton (Huntington County) and John Piper (Brown County) all attended the latest accreditation training by the National Association of County Veterans' Service Officers (NACVSO) and received excellent training. There was no pressure to

become accredited. There was not even pressure to become members of NACVSO. Gary described the training as "outstanding".

My focus since I came to Indianapolis is to accrediting only the two State Service Officers, Jon Brinkley and Kris Bertrand. The Indiana Department of Veterans Affairs would become one of the states recognized by VA to represent veterans in their claims to the VA and the two State Service Officers would perform the same function John Hickey does for the Legion and Paul Curtice does for the VFW. They would be the ones to actually represent the veterans who file appeals with the VA, not the CVSOs. It may even come to the point where IDVA needs to create a third State Service Officer position and maintain an office at the VARO.

The CVSOs would continue to input the original claim and be the veteran's contact at the county level. Nothing about that process would change at all, except that, for those veterans who choose IDVA as their representative, the claim would be sent through IDVA instead of the normal veterans' organization channels.

I have received overwhelming support from the Legion, VFW, DAV and AMVETS for this initiative, all of whom say that they can use the help.

I hope the CVSOs will support it as well.